



National Archives and Records Administration

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To: BRIDG Meeting attendees

The revision of NARA's records disposition policies, processes, and tools is identified in our Strategic Plan as a key strategy to meet the primary goal that "essential evidence will be created, identified, appropriately scheduled, and managed for as long as needed." Without effective records management, records needed to document citizens rights, actions for which Federal officials are responsible, and the historical experience of our nation will be at risk of loss, deterioration, or destruction. In 2000, NARA began a series of three initiatives to: 1) document the current recordkeeping and records use environment in the Federal Government; 2) use that information to analyze NARA's records management policies; and 3) redesign, if necessary, the scheduling, appraisal, and accessioning process. In July 2002, NARA published and sought comments on a *Proposal for A Redesign of Federal Records Management* which sets forth many of the principles in the redesign project. This report is available on the NARA website at http://www.archives.gov/records_management/initiatives/rm_redesign.html#appc should you wish to review it. Both of the two enclosed reports on *Flexible Record Scheduling: Strategies for Analysis*, and *General Record Schedules Strategies* complement the Redesign Proposal report and provide new and different ideas that help provide context for the major redesign principles discussed in the Proposal.

The Flexible Scheduling report specifically discusses the plans for NARA to "change our scheduling and appraisal process so that, except for records of continuing value, agencies can schedule records at any level of aggregation that meets their business needs"(see page 5 of the Redesign Proposal). The report is based largely on the understanding that Federal records scheduling and appraisal practices have become problematic, due to dramatic changes in the way records are created and maintained in Federal agencies, and the use of office automation technology, and another finding that "the proliferation of records and of formats, and the break down of central filing systems, makes it a daunting task to develop detailed inventories and schedules in traditional ways at the traditional series level. In addition, detailed, series based filing systems are not always necessary in an automated retrieval environment" (see pages 9 and 20-23, of the Redesign Proposal). The report on *General Record Schedules Strategies* also builds on the proposal strategies of providing an expanded set of tools to make records management and record scheduling easier for agencies, such as expanding the General Record Schedules (GRS) to include facilitative program records and to develop government-wide schedules that cover permanent records (see page 22 of the Redesign Proposal).

The third handout is a new high-level records management briefing that will become part of a larger "records management toolbox" NARA is developing. This PowerPoint presentation, with a complete script, is similar to other briefings NARA has developed for records officers to use in promoting records management in their agencies, and to help educate agency staff on the importance of managing records appropriately. This new presentation focuses on establishing records management

priorities based on: the extent of records affecting the rights and government accountability, the extent of records of continuing value, and the extent to which records in the above categories are perceived to be at risk of loss or damage due to lack of proper records management or other reason (see page 23 of the Redesign Proposal). It also contains information on how an agency might use the new international records management standard, ISO 15489, to assure that reliable, authentic, trustworthy records are created and maintained for as long as required, that they have integrity, and are usable over the entire period of time that is sufficient to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Your comments on these handouts are very useful to us, and will help us ensure that NARA's Records Management Initiatives will best meet the needs of the records managers, agencies, and others in the Federal Government. We encourage you to submit your comments by email to the records.mgt@nara.gov mailbox before February 7, 2003.